Enclosure 3

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Centro de Documentação

RESEARCH PROJECT ON TIMOR DOCUMENTATION IN MACAU

PROGRESS REPORT No. 3

Work has been progressing at fairly much the same rate as when I last wrote; however, in the past week circumstances have permitted me to proceed at a faster pace, and I hope that those same circumstances will permit the faster pace to be maintained for most of the time. Unfortunately, the first week of February will bring a period of three weekdays when the libraries (and nearly everything else) will be closed on account of it being the Chinese New Year, but I shall have plenty of work that I can do in my room at the hotel.

I am still working on the Boletim da Provincia de Macau e Timor (BPMT). As I mentioned in Report No. 2, I had worked through the years from 1871 to 1879 (the earliest copies held by the Arquivo Histórico de Macau (AHM) at that time) by means of making typed transcripts, as the originals were in too poor a condition to permit the manipulation which would be required for photocopying. I also mentioned that the AHM had just received a more complete set from the Serviços da Administração Civil (SAC). The SAC copies predating those on which I had already worked were also in too poor a condition to be photocopied, so I had to continue making typed transcripts, but I have now completed that period and have just started on 1883. The 1882 volume proved to be in good enough condition to be photocopied with care, so I was able to have the long items photocopied (about 50 B4 size sheets), and only needed three days to type up the many short items. Although I do have access to a photocopier on other premises, it is quite understandable that I cannot take things out of the AHM to make use of it. Fortunately, my work on the 1882 volume coincided with the AHM's photocopier being in working order for the first time in ages, though it only lasted in that condition for a couple of days. They are expecting to remedy the situation with either repairs or a new machine within a much shorter period this time.

I am glad to find that the 1883 volume is also in a good enough condition to be photocopied, so I am only typing up the many short items from that while keeping my fingers crossed that the photocopier will soon be available for the longer ones. But, in order that I should not become unjustifiably elated, I made a quick inspection of the 1884 volume, and found, to my dismay, that it is in no condition to be photocopied, even though it is in a far better condition than the volume of the same year already held by the AHM before receiving the set from the SAC.

In the ex-SAC set, for the 1838 - 1884 period, the following substantial sections are lacking:-

from 5 September 1838 up to, but not including, 16 November 1850;
from 24 October 1857 to 23 October 1858;
from 29 October 1859 to 1 December 1860;
from 7 December 1861 to 29 November 1862;
from 4 January 1869 to 27 December 1869;
5 or 6 odd numbers which I shan't list in this current report.

Timor was not subordinate to the Government of Macau from late 1856 up to early 1867, so one could not have expected much to be published in the Macau Bulletin during that period; though the longest extracts I typed from the pre-1870 volumes were from that very same period, when the Boletim published the full texts of a couple of reports to Parliament from the Minister for the Marine and Overseas on the state of the Overseas Provinces. (I only copied the Timor sections of these reports, but they in themselves were quite long).

Communications were so poor between Macau and Timor in the 1850's that the Boletim seems to have had very little to publish about Timor in that period. The typed excerpts from the volumes present between 16 November 1850 and the end of 1868 only take up 52 A4 size sheets, the following being a chronological breakdown:-

1850 (½ page);	1855 (4);	1860 (0);	1865 (3);
1851 (1½);	1856 (5);	1861 (¼);	1866 (2);
1852 (2);	1857 (1);	1862 (0);	1867 (14);
1853 (1);	1858 (0);	1863 (2);	1868 (10).
1854 (0);	1859 (0);	1864 (5);	

That whole period will easily fit into one folder. For comparison, the extracts from 1870 take up 61 A4 size sheets, though, admittedly, it does contain some unusually long items, even in comparison with the Boletins for the rest of the 1870's.

It is a pity that the 1869 volume is not present, as I suspect that it will have a great deal of Timor material in it, especially on military operations. The late 1860's were disastrous years for the Portuguese in Timor. The Cová revolt, empty coffers, cholera, smallpox, lack of recovery from the disastrous Díli fire of 1866 which destroyed the government palace, treasury, barracks, munitions dump, church and private buildings. One does get some idea of the state of affairs from the aforesaid long items in the 1870 volume which are very critical, the authors being an interim governor, a commander of a warship, and, the most scathing critic of all, an officer on that ship.

I mentioned in my last report that I had begun translating the 1871 extracts into English. I got about half the way through, translating everything in full, stopped, and thought about it for a while. I put it aside and began afresh with the now-extracted 1850-onwards material. I have now finished the typescript of the English translation of the 1850-1868 period, and shall have finished tidying up the 1870 volume within the next week.

I have only given English-language summaries of decrees, diplomas, orders, elections, oaths of allegiance and legislation, except where I feel that it is sufficiently important that a full translation be given. A full translation is given of general correspondence and news reports. I feel that the full text of all the items in the original Portuguese ought be recovered, but that the choices I have made in what is translated in full and what is only given in summary will be sufficient for most people and most purposes.

There were no tables of customs revenue, shipping or hospital movement in the 1850-1868 copies of the Boletim, that is, for Timor, but they are present from 1870 onwards. In order to dispense with the necessity of reproducing these in English as well as in Portuguese; and considering that, apart from the customs revenue, summaries in English would be inadequate; and as, apart from headings, short observations and illnesses, the tables are composed mainly of numerals and proper names, I have decided that, for at least the present, it will be sufficient for me to provide a glossary of the Portuguese terms used in those tables with the English equivalents.

I am hoping to be able to arrange to make photocopies of all the Timor material in the Boletim Eclesiástico da Diocese de Macau within the next few weeks. I expect this to run to 2000 - 3000 sheets. Father Teixeira says that there is only one complete set of it left in Macau, the one that he personally installed in the offices of St. Lawrence's Church. The only other complete set in Macau was disposed of last year after being found to be irrecoverably damaged by termites. The sets in the Diocesan Archives, the AHM, and the Biblioteca Nacional de Macau (BNM) are in various stages of incompleteness, and some of the numbers in the AHM collection had been very badly damaged by termites before they were exterminated. It isn't too bad if one only has to wonder whether the missing letter was an "a" or an "o", because one can usually work it out from the context, or if one misreads a termite

hole as a punctuation mark, but the reader's problems are much greater if one finds that square centimetres of text have been eaten away.

I must stress that, as far as I am aware, there has been no damage by termites to any printed or manuscript material since its arrival at either the new library or the new archives.

There are hopes of being able to send the person who does the binding for the AHM on a seminar (at least) to gain a knowledge of the treatment and preservation of manuscript and printed materials, and investigations are to be made on the most suitable microfilming equipment. If anyone should have any recommendations on the subject and know of any recently published or unpublished (even internal) comparative studies on such equipment by or on behalf of institutions with similar types of material, I'm sure that it would be welcomed by the AHM.

Even if considering nothing earlier than the 19th century published material, there is so much here not only on Macau, Timor and China, but on Hongkong, Japan, Thailand, yes, even Peru and Cuba, and it will be a great loss if a considerable amount of it is not committed to microfilm.

People may be relying on the fact that something was published in a book or periodical and find one day that there are no copies left of that book or periodical. They will then have to rely on whatever may have been selectively used in a later work drawing on such sources.

A couple of weeks ago I finished going through the ex-SAC copy of the BPMT for 1881. All of the regular issues were present, but the gaps in the pagination made it obvious that it must have been lacking at least three supplements, so I asked to see the same year in the other set. After it was taken from the shelf the question arose as to whether that copy was even in a good enough condition to have the pages turned. Fortunately I was able to check on those supplements without causing damage, but I feel certain that such would not have been the case if I had had to inspect every page.

I do not have the right to insist on seeing something for my own purposes and, by so doing, leave it in a state where the next user's access to it may have to be restricted or the restorer's task made harder still. But the material must be available in some form, a durable form which will allow ready access for the few using it now and in the near future, while preserving it for those who come after, not just for those of Portuguese and/or Chinese expression, but for those of other expression who may come to appreciate what is available here. I think that there would be a sufficient number of institutional libraries and some individuals interested in acquiring microfilm or microfiche copies of some of the more important Macanese periodicals of the past 160 years to make it a profitable proposition for the authorities once the initial outlay on equipment has been covered.

I have not yet made any investigation of unpublished material, but I am told that a list of reports received from the SAC, including a number of items relating to Timor up to 1900, was completed a couple of days ago, so I intend to at least take the references, even if I don't have time to read the actual reports.

I would say that the Biblioteca Nacional de Macau (BNM) still has loads of work on its hands before it catches up with all the old material. It seems to be keeping up with the new material arriving, but there is still a great deal of sorting out required of what might have been in storage for ages, cataloguing, checking through truck-loads of old holdings from various departmental libraries. There has been some progress on the card catalogue at the new installations, but it is only natural that they would have to concentrate on the things for which there might be most demand.

The BNM was supposed to be getting the SAC's holdings of the Boletim Oficial de Timor, but, as far as I know, it has not yet been located.

I have not yet sent off any of the things that I mentioned in my last report, but I should be able to do so within the next couple of weeks. The first batch will include photocopies of the articles from O Clarim and the Portuguese/English summary of the same, the Portuguese/English extracts/translation from the BEDM* 1850-1868 (pp.1-36 in English, pp.37-88 in Portuguese), and the same from the 1870 volume, which will be about 100 pages in all by the time it is finished.

I shan't wait until I have done English translations before sending down photocopies of the other work collected, else they might get mislaid if something should happen to me. One can't get such things as padded postal bags in Macau, and some people go around the streets collecting every carton that they can lay their hands on, and they probably sell them to a dealer somewhere, but I should be able to dig up some clean packaging material around town.

Charges for rooms at the hotel went up 10 % in mid-December, so I'm now paying about $12.00 more per week. The weather is very cold, and it will soon turn wet as well. I'm already into my second bout with a head cold. The management has installed a little electric heater in my room which one can feel the heat from for a range of 2 or 3 feet. I shall survive!

I have heard from Interdocumentation about the translating, and it has been decided to leave things at just translating the book on the Portuguese periodical press in the Far East for the present. I haven't finished it yet, but it is something which I can complete before I leave Macau, pass it on to Father Teixeira for revision, and type up the results when he sends that down to me in Darwin. Anyway, I now think that attempting to translate some of the books on Macau while trying to keep up with the Timor material would have been too much for me.

Macau, January 1984.

Kevin Sherlock

PS. The Biblioteca Nacional de Macau extended its opening hours from mid-December. It is now open from 10.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m., Tuesday to Sunday.

* Should read BPMT.